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Breast Center Celebrates 10th Anniversary



As the Sonnenalp Breast Center marks its 10th anniversary the Center looks back on an amazing journey from a mere vision in Rosana Faessler's eye to a top-notch state-of-the-art Breast Center of Excellence.

I'm really proud of what we've accomplished in the past 10 years states Dr. Janice Ugale foremost breast radiologist for the Breast Center. We started the center 10 years ago with a digital mammography unit. It was the first digital mammography unit in the mountains.

Yet even more importantly the Breast Center celebrates 10 years of touching thousands of women's lives in the valley by offering some 5000 vital and often life-saving screenings diagnoses and treatments each year with state-of-the-art technology and expert care. In this small community alone the Sonnenalp Breast Center has diagnosed roughly 500 women with breast cancer an average of 50 women each year - since it opened in 2002. Research has shown catching breast cancer early can dramatically increase a women's chance of survival. The Sonnenalp Breast Center is all about helping ladies to catch breast cancer very early states Rosana Faessler one of the founders of the Breast Center and President of the Sonnenalp of Vail Foundation.

The vision of a breast center

Faessler is all too familiar with the life-and-death struggle with breast cancer and the importance of having the right tools and the best medical treatment possible. Rosana's mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in the 1980s. She recalls traveling from Brazil her native country with her mother many times to MD Anderson in Houston for treatment. She was immediately struck by the excellent and first-rate diagnostic capabilities her mother experienced.

In Vail Faessler began wondering why this world-renowned resort community could not offer equally life-altering diagnoses and treatments. She began talking with then VVMC Foundation President Art Kelton along with good friends Dr. George McNeill and Sheika Gramshammer about her dream to offer the same quality of care her mother received in Houston. VVMC was already in the planning stages for Shaw Regional Cancer

Center and Faessler's inspired idea seemed to fit in beautifully with those plans. Faessler along with a group of other visionaries launched the Sonnenalp of Vail Foundation in 1997 and held the first annual Scramble Against Cancer Golf Tournament in 1999 to raise funds for the cancer center raising \$67403.

Reaching important milestones for women

Since that time the Sonnenalp of Vail Foundation has continued to raise somewhere between \$50000 and \$100000 each year through its tournament which largely goes to purchase equipment for the Breast Center. Faessler understands how challenging it is for women to travel to Denver and deal with the angst of traffic and parking to be treated. Which is why she remains determined the Sonnenalp Breast Center will continue to provide the best diagnostic and treatment tools and care available. There are a lot of people who have been diagnosed with breast cancer in the valley she says. My goal was to get good equipment good oncology services here. Her goal truly has come to fruition.

Women can come to the Breast Center assured in the knowledge they will receive personal compassionate excellent care with state-of-the-art diagnostic tools observes Doris Kirchner CEO of the Vail Valley Medical Center.

The Center has all the same sophisticated equipment you would find anywhere including along the Front Range explains Colleen Berga manager of the Sonnenalp Breast Center. The center offers screening Breast Ultrasound Sonocine which is particularly helpful for women with dense breasts a Breast Ultrasound Biopsy Breast MRI Biopsy and Stereotactic Breast Biopsy. In addition the center can perform Breast Needle Localization Ductograms and cyst aspiration.

The Sonnenalp Breast Imaging Center has been fortunate enough to receive the support of other organizations in the valley dedicated to raising funds to help in the fight against cancer notes Peggy Carey Vice President of Shaw Regional Cancer Center. For instance last year the Vail Breast Cancer Awareness Group funded the Stereotactic Breast Biopsy table and also created a fund to help women with the cost of additional diagnostic testing. This equipment along with a dedicated staff and the excellent medical care recently earned the Sonnenalp Breast Center the American College of Radiology's Breast Imaging Center of Excellence which is the highest accreditation achievable through the ACR.

Just as importantly says Faessler A lot of people tell me how beautiful and friendly the Sonnenalp Breast Center is and how well they were treated. What better legacy can you give a beloved mother?

For more information about cancer care locally visit www.shawcancercenter.com (/{localLink:1164}). Shaw is a service of Vail Valley Medical Center a nonprofit since 1965.

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